

Rapid and Sustained Response by the Laboratory Animal Research Community During an Infectious Disease Pandemic: Lessons Being Learned from COVID-19--A workshop

Committee

Jill Ascher

Chair

Jill Ascher is the director of the Division of Veterinary Resources at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Ascher has over 25 years of experience in veterinary medicine including five years of experience at the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), where she most recently served as the deputy director of the Division of Veterinary Services. During her time at the FDA, Jill significantly increased social-housing of all social species in the animal facility and expanded training programs for veterinary staff and researchers who work with research animals in the facility. Her diverse career in veterinary medicine also includes over 15 years of experience in private practice in the U.S. and internationally and experience in industry, academia, and government. She holds licenses to practice in both the U.S. and the U.K. Some of her key career achievements include being a team leader in coordinating and carrying out the relocation of the FDA/CBER Laboratory Animal Program from the NIH Bethesda, Maryland campus to the FDA White Oak campus in Silver Spring, Maryland. In addition, Dr. Ascher served as a lead veterinarian in setting up and managing the FDA Biosafety Level 3 animal research corridor including the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Select Agent Research Laboratory. She organized and managed other special projects at FDA such as gnotobiotic mouse and humanized mouse programs, among others. Dr. Ascher was named by the FDA Office of the Director to serve on a special internal assessment team with the purpose of ensuring adoption of best practices in animal research colony management throughout the 7 FDA centers. Dr. Ascher earned her BS in microbiology from Cornell University, her MA in microbiology from Boston University School of Medicine and her DVM from Tufts University. She then completed a residency in laboratory animal medicine at the University of Rochester Medical Center while concurrently earning a MPH.

Joyce Cohen

Member

Joyce Cohen is the associate director of the Division of Animal Resources at the Yerkes National Primate Research Center. She is also an associate professor in Emory University School of Medicine's Division of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and a diplomate of the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DACLAM). Dr. Cohen joined the Yerkes Research Center in 2006 with responsibility for clinical medicine, colony management, residency training, research support, and administration at the Yerkes Field Station. She was promoted to lead veterinarian at the field station in 2009 and appointed as assistant director of animal resources at the main center in early 2012. In her current role as associate director, she oversees the Division of Animal Resources, which includes Animal Care, Animal Records, Behavioral Management, Colony Management, Occupational Health and Safety, Research Resources and Veterinary Medicine. Her research interests include a combination of laboratory animal medicine, research, veterinary medicine and behavioral primatology. She has published research on the incidence of diabetes and helicobacter in sooty mangabeys, and is currently engaged in research on the microbiome of the sooty mangabey. She collaborates with investigators on infectious disease studies, such as AIDS and Zika virus infection, and she manages the NIH-supported Specific Pathogen Free Rhesus monkey breeding colony. Dr. Cohen has been involved in a number of facility design projects for the benefit of the center's animals at both research sites, including the Clinical Veterinary Medicine and Research Building, the automated feeders attached to socially housed monkey compounds, and novel indoor/outdoor animal housing. She received her veterinary medical degree from The University of Pennsylvania and her postdoctoral training in laboratory animal medicine at the Tri Institutional Program at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Weill Medical College, and Rockefeller University.

Michael Huerkamp

Member

Michael Huerkamp is currently the executive director of the Division of Animal Resources at Emory University where he holds the academic rank of professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. As director of the animal resources program, Dr. Huerkamp is the attending veterinarian at Emory and oversees animal husbandry and veterinary services programs delivered by a staff of 110 for a census of over 75,000 research mammals located in 9 buildings comprising 155,000 gross square feet of space. He is responsible for the health, safety, and research productivity of over 1,800 persons with animal research facility access. Dr. Huerkamp is a veterinarian and Diplomate of the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine. He received his DVM from The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1984 and completed postdoctoral training in laboratory animal medicine at the University of Michigan in 1987.

David M. Kurtz

Member

David Kurtz currently serves as the Head, Quality Assurance Laboratory (QAL) within the Comparative Medicine Branch (CMB) at National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), one of 27 institutes within the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Kurtz received his DVM from the University of Tennessee in 1989. After 2 years as a small animal private practitioner, Dr. Kurtz completed a residency in laboratory animal medicine at the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) in 1993. He went on to earn a PhD in 1998 from UAB in molecular and cellular pathology in 1998. Dr. Kurtz completed a post-doctoral fellowship in the Division of Cardiology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis (WUSTL) studying metabolic gene expression, as well as serving as a clinical veterinarian for the Division of Comparative Medicine. From 2003 to 2011, he served as the attending veterinarian at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina under a contract with Experimental Pathology Laboratories, Inc. Dr. Kurtz received diplomate status in the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine in 2005. During that same period, Dr. Kurtz also served as the attending veterinarian for The Hamner Institutes of Health Sciences and Integrated Laboratory Systems, Inc., both located in Research Triangle Park, NC. Dr. Kurtz joined NIEHS in 2011.

Joseph T. Newsome

Member

Joseph T. Newsome is an associate professor of pathology, associate director of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources (DLAR), Health Sciences, and director for the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Animal Facility shared resource at the University of Pittsburgh. While working on his masters degree in experimental pathobiology, Dr. Newsome worked with the research team of Dr. Richard Olson that developed the first vaccine for feline leukemia. For the next ten years after obtaining his doctorate degree, he wore multiple hats at Georgetown University in Washington, DC including facility manager, assistant professor of surgery and pathology, and clinical veterinarian overseeing surgery and radiological research support. In 1996 he became a diplomat of ACLAM and concurrently completed a post-doctoral training program in experimental pathobiology, assisting in the development of the animal models for the team that eventually led to the current Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine. From 2000-2012 he was the University of Pittsburgh's attending veterinarian. He is the author or co-author of over 65 articles and book chapters. During his career he has been the principal investigator (4) or coinvestigator (6) on multiple NCRR/OPIR/NIH funded grants focused on renovations or new construction projects related to vivaria in multiple institutions. He is involved in national and industry level organizations such as ACLAM, Association of Primate Veterinarians (APV), AALAS, and AVMA with leadership roles such as being a subcommittee chair for the ACLAM foundation since 2010 and was vice chair of the Policies and Procedures Coordinating Committee (PPCC) of AAALAS. His current focus and expertise are in management, biosecurity, biocontainment, facility design and operations, and cancer modeling, immunology and virology. He received a BSc in microbiology in 1980, MS in pathobiology in 1982, and DVM in 1986 from the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Brianna Skinner

Member

Brianna Skinner is a commissioned corps officer in the U.S. Public Health Service. She also served in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps within the continental United States and overseas. She recently joined the Office of Counterterrorism and Emerging Threats (OCET) at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) where she currently serves as a senior regulatory veterinarian providing subject matter expertise as an animal model expert for the administration of policies to facilitate the availability of safe and effective medical countermeasures against chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear agents, and emerging threats. Prior to transferring to the FDA, she worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for over eleven years supporting infectious disease research and consulting with principal investigators on animal care and use in compliance with federal laws and regulations. She is a diplomate in the ACLAM and earned both her BS in animal and poultry sciences and DVM from Tuskegee University. Her MPH in epidemiology and public health education and promotion was earned from Benedictine University.